

**Town Meeting
March 1, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
Mt. Mansfield Union High School**

Moderator: David Barrington

Selectboard Members present: Catherine McMains (Chair), Kim Mercer, Tim Nulty

Town Administrator: Todd Odit

Town Meeting began with a call to order at 9:07 a.m. by the moderator, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. David Barrington made some opening remarks, including discussing the location of amenities and the many displays around the building. Mr. Barrington made introductions. He invited Representatives George Till and Bill Frank to make comments.

Mr. Till introduced Senator Michael Sirotkin. Mr. Sirotkin encouraged the citizens to reach out to Senators, as well as the House representatives. He discussed how many people each represent, noting it is a big district. Mr. Frank thanked everyone for the opportunity to represent them. He said people are always welcome to contact us, noting monthly discussion periods are held at the library with him and Mr. Till. He stated that 77 Browns River Middle School students took part in the Penguin Plunge and raised over \$7,000. Mr. Till thanked everyone for letting him represent them in Montpelier. He reminded everyone about the Doyle survey and noted he provided a written statement in the Town Report, saying he would be available for discussion later.

Mr. Barrington made some additional opening remarks. He discussed some housekeeping matters, noting that only registered voters may speak during the meeting. He explained the role of the moderator, summarizing points from the Voter's Guide on page 2 of the Town Report. Mr. Barrington drew everyone's attention to the official warning in the Town Report. He noted that items on the Australian ballot can be discussed during Town Meeting, noting what types of comments would be appropriate or inappropriate.

ARTICLE I: Shall the voters approve the proposed fiscal year ending 2017 budget of \$3,906,650, including spending unanticipated funds such as State and Federal grants and gifts?

Motion made by Paul Gross; **seconded** by Cathy Paris.

Mr. Barrington asked the Selectboard to present details of the budget, reminding those present how they may participate. Ms. McMains recognized this as Ms. Mercer's last day on the Selectboard, noting that Ms. Mercer will continue to volunteer as the Chair of the Recreation Committee. She discussed the revenues, noting the following:

- Increase of \$66,467 in General Tax Revenue.
- Penalties and Interest have no budgetary changes.
- Intergovernmental increased to match what we are getting from the State.
 - Class 2 Road Grant is budgeted at \$175,000 to offset paving. These grants are cyclical and may be available during the period, but are not guaranteed.
 - Act 68 Revenue relates to the consolidation of the school district. The Town is now collecting taxes from Underhill ID and receives revenue from the State, which is increase of \$4,000.
 - Special Grants are reduced by \$273,600. The grant for the sidewalk construction in Jericho Center was completed, so the amount is reduced. The \$40,000 budgeted is for a grant we applied for, but have not yet received to perform a scoping study.
 - Safe Routes to School Grant is up \$175,430 because we have been very successful in getting these grants. This will be discussed further under the Capital Budget.

- Licenses and Fines:
 - Summer Recreation Fees have increased for more field trips and programs. We are also anticipating increased enrollment.
 - The reduction of \$1,500 in Dog Licenses reflects a program we started last year to provide free dog licenses to those with current rabies vaccinations. We are also looking to provide a low cost rabies clinic in the future.
- Interest on Checking remains the same.
- Miscellaneous:
 - General Dynamics Plowing increase is based on billing, due to increased salt prices.
 - Comcast Lease increased by \$17,500 because of the new lease and the increase in fees.
- Use of Reserve Funds are to cover some expenses the Town incurs. The increase in the Heavy Vehicles & Equipment Fund will be used for the new tandem truck and loader. The Reappraisal Fund decreased because it is pretty much completed; though some funds are needed for appeals.

Peter Booth stated the items under miscellaneous look like expenses, asking if there is a plowing fund. Ms. McMains responded that General Dynamics pays us to plow their roads, so we bill them. Mr. Booth clarified that Comcast leases property. Ms. McMains said yes, by the Town Garage. Wayne Howe follow up on Mr. Booth's question, saying we are talking about revenue for plowing, but on the expense side there isn't a line item. He asked if the revenues and expenses are tracked and if there is a net gain. Ms. McMains said yes, this has been a question over the years and we try to make sure the Town doesn't lose money on it.

Dave Schuler asked whether the budgeted amount for Law Enforcement Fines makes sense when the actual in Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) is \$12,000 less. Ms. McMains discussed the approach to budgeting for fines with Mr. Schuler, noting the inconsistency in the amounts and timing. She said every year we reevaluate when preparing the budget. Mr. Schuler said it may be something to look at in the future. Ms. McMains agreed, saying we don't want to target a number.

Ms. McMains continued discussing the revenues, noting the following:

- Record Preservation Fund decreased because recording fees are down, so we will use reserve funds to cover preservation costs.
- Sidewalk/Paths Fund decreased by \$35,880 because of lower construction costs in FY17.
- Buildings and Property Fund budgeted \$100,000, change from \$20,000, because we need to do major work on the Town Hall which we will discuss under the Capital Budget.
- Total Reserve Funds are decreasing \$207,500.
- Total revenues are budgeted at \$3,906,650, a reduction of \$13,203.

Ms. McMains asked everyone to turn to page 24 of the Town Report to discuss the Capital Budget. She explained the process starts in late fall, including discussions at Selectboard meetings and at a public hearing. She said the Selectboard then votes to accept the Capital Budget and it is incorporated into the main budget. Wendell Farrell asked about the proposed General Fund budget. Ms. McMains responded that the expenses will be covered after the Capital Budget.

Ms. McMains discussed the Capital Budget, noting the following:

- Projects are listed on the left; the Expense Line number is the line item where the project is included in the main budget; and the right side lists the funding sources.
- Town Hall Improvements: The Town Hall is in need of work, with rot and holes. The first floor windows were not replaced during the renovation and you can feel a breeze blow through them. She said it is important to take care of the rot, the building, and the windows at the same time. We are budgeting \$100,000 from reserves to do the work.

- Jericho Library Expansion: We have budgeted \$31,500 to address issues that were identified during an energy audit and other work related to the expansion.
- Debt Service: The amount is reduced every year. The bond was reissued at lower interest rate and it will be finished in November 2028.
- Highways:
 - The highly anticipated Transportation and the Master Bike/Pedestrian Plans were finished. Also completed were assessments of gravel roads and smaller bridges and culverts. The plans and assessments are being used to prioritize where we spend our money.
 - We are allocating \$335,000 to paving; with \$160,000 from operating funds and \$175,000 from a paving grant. Discussed options available if we are not awarded the paving grant. The big goal is to pave Browns Trace Road and Lee River Road to Barber Farm Road, allocating money in the Center for a raised crosswalk.
 - We are allocating \$65,000 to gravel road improvements coming from operating funds.
 - Riverside Street Network Scoping: We have applied for a grant to study the current roads and expected roads needed in the future with the Character-based Zoning in the district.
- Heavy Equipment/Vehicles: We have budgeted \$8,160 from reserves and \$110,000 from operating funds to purchase a loader and a new tandem truck.
- Paths and Sidewalks:
 - Awarded grants for all four projects.
 - Discussed projects for each grant awarded, including the grant amount and the matching funds required.
 - Riverside Crosswalk project is expected to be completed by the end of FY17, noting what work will be done.

Mr. Booth asked when the Riverside project would start if it will be done at the end of FY17. Mr. Odit responded that we are waiting on final approval of plans from vTrans, then we will put it out to bid early to mid-spring. He said it could wrap up by fall, but if there are any delays it would be complete by the end of FY17. Ms. McMains stated the total capital costs are \$1,166,343; with \$140,680 from reserves, \$517,983 from operating funds, and \$507,680 from grants. Rob Allen asked about the column to the left of the fiscal year expenditure, whether it is the total or remaining cost. Ms. McMains responded it is the total project cost over a period of time. Mr. Allen asked if some funds have already been spent. Ms. McMains said some may have been spent already and some may be spent in the future.

Mr. Nulty discussed the general expenditures, noting the following:

- Town Treasurer: Salaries are a major part of all department costs. The increase of 7% is due to an extra four hours for the Financial Coordinator each week. Benefits increased 4% reflecting the increased cost. The differences between departments has to do with changes in employees throughout the year.
- Administration:
 - Salaries and Benefits increased 3% and 7%, respectively. No changes in hours.
 - Outside Annual Audit reflects the actual price negotiated.
 - Legal Expense: We hired a new attorney, Claudine Safar. The expense for the new attorney increased \$4,000 and we are getting wonderful support.
 - Postage increased.
- Town Clerk:
 - Salaries are up 1%; the general wage increase this year was 3%. Mr. Nulty discussed how salary increases are determined using a standard process implemented a few years ago.
 - Board Fees/Elections increase \$17,000 due to elections to be held and possible appeals.
 - License Payments to State increased.

- Listing:
 - The budget is down 49% overall because the reassessment has been completed. Weekly hours are increasing and total benefits up 18% because one assessor joined the Town's plan.
 - Reappraisal decreased \$58,000 due to the completion; with \$2,000 budgeted to cover possible costs of appeals.
- Health Office increased 21% because the stipends for the Health Officer and Dog Warden were increased.
- Planning and Zoning:
 - Salaries increased by \$20,000 because we hired a new Town Planner. She has been a great addition and has made the Selectboard's lives easier.
 - Benefits are up quite a bit because the new employee is on a family plan, while the previous employee was single.
 - The Zoning Administrator is also wonderful and is learning quickly. She is on the benefit plan and her predecessor wasn't. She also has increased hours.
 - Professional Consultants increased because a consultant will be used to assist the Planning Commission. The updated Town Plan was implemented and adopted, another example of the Town Planner's effectiveness.
- Highways and Bridges:
 - Salaries and Benefits have increased with two new employees.
 - Telephone increased with a separate fire alarm added at the Town Garage.
 - Heavy Vehicle/Equipment was discussed during the Capital Budget.
 - Equipment Maintenance & Repairs increased.
 - Hired Equipment decreased since we purchased some equipment that we used to lease.
 - Road Improvements increased \$50,000.
 - Gas, Oil and Diesel decreased due to lower fuel prices.
 - Signage & Striping increased by \$10,000 because there was considerable public request to narrow travel lanes to allow more room for bicycles. It is having the desired effect, but it wears out faster.

Linda Willmott asked whether purchasing larger trucks is causing gravel roads to break down faster. Ms. McMains and Mr. Nulty discussed ditching and drainage on gravel roads. Ms. Willmott asked if we are purchasing vehicles that are heavier than our roads can tolerate, noting the end of her road routinely turns into a pit of pot holes. She asked if we could buy a smaller truck to accomplish the same thing. Mr. Nulty stated the trucks are below the weight limits. He said if that particular spot is a problem, then we should address it.

Ms. Mercer discussed Summer Recreation, noting the following:

- Total Summer Recreation expenses are up by \$7,000.
- Summer Recreation is expanding to serve more kids and offer more programs.

Lynne Robbins asked if parent fees offset the field trip costs. She asked about scholarships and the fee structure. Ms. Mercer responded that Summer Recreation is subsidized by the Town budget. She discussed the affordability of the program and the costs involved for residents and non-residents. Ms. Mercer stated Insurances increased, which include Unemployment, Workers Compensation, and Liability, noting the costs are out of our control.

Ms. McMains resumed discussion of expenditures, noting the following:

- Public Health and Safety:
 - Essex Rescue requested \$13,000, a \$1,500 increase.
 - Richmond Rescue requested \$8,000, an increase of \$2,000.
 - Both rescues have paramedic services.
 - Police Services increased by \$3,000; though we are not changing hours, the contract cost is up.

Kathy Voigt-Walsh asked if the Selectboard has given any thought to health and wellness as topic for the Town to address with some of its committees. She discussed the importance of looking at the issue from a broader perspective. Ms. McMains discussed the efforts to improve health and wellness by increasing sidewalks, trails, recreation, and alternate forms of transportation. She stated the Town also incorporates health and wellness initiatives for staff members, saying there isn't a specific line item addressing it.

Ms. McMains discussed the Underhill-Jericho Fire Department (UJFD) budget, noting the following:

- The Selectboard's involvement in the budgeting process, including meetings held.
- Income is \$544,498 from both towns, which is a small increase from last year.
- Essex Rescue is no longer paying rent.
- Although the budget is essentially flat, Jericho's portion increased by \$2,531.
- Salaries and benefits are broken out so the full-time salary amount is pure salaries.
- The gear part previously included in salaries and benefits has been added to the appropriate line items.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a new line item at \$37,990.
- EMS and rescue support has become a larger part of UJFD, with approximately 41% of responses.
- UJFD is currently re-evaluating the EMS support jointly with Essex Rescue.

Tate Brannon asked about the difference of expense between Underhill and Jericho relating to the Fire Department. Ms. McMains said it is the typical split between the towns of 60% Jericho and 40% Underhill, primarily due to the population difference. Joshua Benes stated the Budget 2015-2016 numbers do not add up between Underhill and Jericho, though every other year adds correctly. Ms. McMains responded that there was a problem with a line item last year, which resulted in a difference between approval and printing the Town Report.

Ms. McMains continued discussing the UJFD budget, noting the following:

- Workers compensation insurance increased, it is very expensive because the Fire Department has a high injury cost risk.
- Fire safety equipment increased as equipment is being replaced.
- Truck replacement reserve is up as they build reserves to buy new truck at a later date.
- The rest of the budget items have decreased.
- The total budget is \$544,498, with \$326,699 being Jericho's portion.

Jessie Pelton asked that future budgets include a column for changes, percent and/or dollar amount change. Ms. McMains agreed that makes sense, noting that each year when the Town meets with the Fire Department they work towards a similar format as the Town's for comparability.

Jean Clause asked if we save any money in either Essex Rescue and Richmond Rescue because the Fire Department is now offering those services. Ms. McMains responded that these are all questions we are working on. She discussed the coverage, noting that the Fire Department does not have paramedic coverage. Ms. Clause clarified there is EMS support of \$37,900 in the budget. Mr. Nulty stated the original intent of the partnership was for better coverage. He discussed how it has worked and said it has generated more demand. Ms. Clause said she noticed the Rivers Land Account has income that is not listed as income for the Fire Department. Ms. McMains said the Fire Department is using the Rivers land income to offset property taxes and costs of maintaining the property, so they don't want it in the operating budget. Ms. Clause stated it is earning almost \$37,000, asking how much is in the account from prior years. Ms. McMains said those are all questions she cannot answer.

Mr. Howe thanked the Fire Department for their service. He asked about the format, as to whether there is a more detailed budget than what is presented here. He said in the future it would be helpful to have some of this information in a format similar to the Town's format. Ms. McMains said we have been working on that and this

is where we are now. Mathew Champlin responded to the questions about the tax portions not adding up and the Rivers Land Account balance. Dave Schuler asked for an update on the Rivers property. He noted that property taxes of \$9,500 doesn't seem right for the entire property. Ms. McMains discussed the Town's version of current use, saying the Rivers' property is in that program which will be discontinued in 2016. She gave an update on the Rivers property, saying the Fire Department is currently working on cleaning up the property and preparing the gravel pit for closure. She said the Town proposals are still on the books if the Fire Department decides to avail themselves of any of them in the future. Mr. Barrington gave a brief history of the legacy and ownership of the Rivers property for those who may not be aware of it. Ms. McMains stated the property is being quietly marketed at this time.

Elizabeth Bernstein said there have been concerns voiced about how the Fire Department reports its budget and why the Rivers property is not included. She asked what a concerned voter could do with that disquiet. Ms. McMains explained that the Selectboard works with the Fire Department on its general budget and the Rivers property was a gift to the Fire Department. She discussed the rationale for keeping the property separate from the Fire Department's regular duties, noting the information is available for people to see here. Ms. McMains reiterated that the Selectboard understands the concerns and they are being worked on. Mr. Nulty stated the Fire Department is not a department of the Town, it is a free-standing private non-profit entity.

Ms. Bernstein clarified that there have been a number of questions about the Fire Department and although they may not be a municipal entity, there is a lot of money funding it. She asked what a voter could do if they still have concerns about this very large portion of the budget during this Town Meeting. Mr. Nulty discussed the reasons why the Fire Department would respond to calls when they do not have paramedic services. Ms. Mercer clarified that the citizens are all in control of this budget now and they can change it if they wish, any line item. Mr. Barrington discussed the other options that voters have during this meeting. Ms. McMains added that a Task Force was created following last year's meeting and they have been working throughout the year. She said we had hoped to have a draft report by Town Meeting, but we don't. She said they have been doing a lot of work and some of these questions may be resolved as a part of that.

Chuck Lacy stated he serves on the committee with four other people, listing the members. He discussed the committees work since they were appointed, saying they are working hard, but are not done yet. Mr. Barrington asked about the charge of that committee. Mr. Lacy explained they are charged with looking at the expenses of the Fire Department, the services, and compare them. He discussed the steps they have taken, saying it has been educational and he had no idea how complicated it is to respond to an emergency. He discussed the committee's efforts to compare UJFD with fire departments in Charlotte, Colchester Center, Richmond, and Hinesburg, noting the nuances involved in municipal departments versus private non-profits.

Mr. Lacy said they have found remarkable transparency, noting examples of information provided. He said the Fire Department welcomes anyone to attend trainings or business meetings, they found it to be a very welcoming place. He discussed the financial differences between a municipal department and a non-profit the department, noting they are comparing UJFD with two of each. Mr. Lacy said so far they have not really found a financial reason to switch from one type to another, but that will be included in their final report. He said their committee reviewed the budget and agree with the recommendation the Selectboard has made to the citizens.

Bill Drislane said it is encouraging to hear that presentation and that work between the Town and the Fire Department is coming along, recognizing the work of all involved. He said at the end of the day, if the Fire Department decided to close up shop, they could; they have two customers and we are the biggest customer. He stated the accounting presentation should be accurate, noting examples of areas that need improvement. Mr. Drislane said it would be more helpful if the financials were divided into a balance sheet and income statement, saying we have a good reason to have an understanding of the numbers there.

Matt Thomson stated he is on the Fire Services Task Force, thanking Chuck for presenting the information. He discussed the importance of UJFD's strategy to using their vehicles and equipment, noting the impact on insurance rates. He discussed the Fire Department's efforts to keep costs as low as possible, by using less expensive types and extending the lives longer than other departments, noting an example. Mr. Thomson said the Task Force also reviewed the decision to service the vehicles locally and believe it is sound and rational. He discussed their efforts to ensure the comparisons with other departments are fair, noting some of the challenges in doing so. He compared UJFD's total budget, including contribution to Essex Rescue, to Hinesburg's total budget on a cost per household basis; saying there is about a \$27 difference.

Mr. Thomson said it is more expensive here, but arguably there is great coverage and an impact on insurance costs that has not yet been quantified. He stated UJFD is well-trained and well-equipped with service that rivals pretty much anywhere else in the State. He said we do support this year's budget and if he did not, he would probably still support it this year because today is not the day to pick it apart by line item, encouraging people to get involved and engaged over the next year.

Ms. Mercer continued discussion of general expenditures, noting the following:

- Building and Property:
 - Castle and Lowery Cemeteries increased so we can deal with the access to the Cemetery behind Dollar General.
 - Jericho Greens will be spent on landscaping the Town Hall property and mowing across the Town.
 - Maintenance/Repair Town Facilities increase of \$75,000 was discussed under Capital Budget, the Town Hall improvements.
 - Sidewalks – Construction decrease was also discussed under Capital Budget.
- Open Space/Public Use is the cost to make improvements to Mobbs, general improvements to the trails are made each year.

Elizabeth Thompson asked about the Open Space Acquisition that has been at zero for each year in the report. Mr. Odit responded that we have an open space fund but we haven't purchased any in a few years. Ms. Thompson said she saw income under Open Space; asking what that is, where income would come from, and where expense would go. Mr. Odit discussed the use of Open Space funds to make improvements to Mobbs Farm. Ms. Thompson asked where the money came from. Mr. Odit responded from accumulated reserves.

Andrea Hook asked why there is a line item for Greens, as well as Jericho Center Green. She also asked about the trees on the Jericho Center Green that had a virus, were treated, and don't look any better. Ms. McMains said the difference is the landscaping for the Town Hall and the mowing of the Jericho Center Green. She responded that the Tree Warden would assess the trees and determine if they need to be removed.

Ms. Mercer continued discussion of general expenditures, noting the following:

- Landfill costs are decreasing because the number of wells we need to monitor decreased.
- Mandated Appropriations are costs that all municipalities are required to pay.
- Chittenden County Transit Authority (CCTA) increased as we phase in to the eventual annual cost of \$14,000 a year. The bus line has been very successful and has been subsidized for the first few years.

Rob Allen asked if we have ridership information about that route and how many people are benefiting. Ms. Mercer said we do have it. Mr. Allen asked how many people per day. Ms. McMains responded that the numbers will come from CCTA, noting the route has been subsidized for three years and if there was not enough ridership it would have been discontinued. Ms. Mercer agreed the information should be included in the Town Report.

Tate Brannon stated he is in support of the bus, saying he has been talking to CCTA. He discussed the ridership information CCTA shared with him about the two stops in Town, saying it has been pretty successful. He discussed the need for a shelter at the Jericho Corners stop, but CCTA requires increased ridership for them to install one. Mr. Schuler asked if CCTA would be able to provide information about ridership, profitability, etc. Ms. Mercer responded they would. Mr. Schuler discussed other bus routes that are profitable without Town funding. Mr. Odit said generally routes are not profitable by themselves on fares alone, noting the fares are fixed and are set by the CCTA Board annually. Mr. Schuler discussed the need for information in the Town Report to justify the request for funding.

Bonnie Dustacosty said she is new in Town and asked where the village is located. Ms. Mercer responded that there are three villages, noting the locations of each: Jericho Corners, Jericho Center, and Riverside. Ms. Dustacosty asked that people specify which village area they are talking about. Heidi Klein said she is not a rider on the bus, but she likes to support it. She noted the benefits of the bus service, noting that it is one piece of a broader strategy. She suggested we think about how we can increase ridership as a Town, rather than relying on CCTA.

Wendell Farrell said under Non-Mandated Appropriations, while he doesn't want to change the total number, he would like to rearrange where \$4,000 is being spent, as follows:

- Increase Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf by \$1,000.
- Increase Jericho Food Shelf by \$1,000.
- Increase Women Helping Battered Women by \$2,000.
- Decrease Jericho Historical Society (JHS) to \$0.

Mr. Farrell said he doesn't know how they spend that money, there is no accountability and no transparency. He discussed the eviction of Saxon Hill School as a tenant. He said JHS doesn't need the money, saying last year he tried to find out what they do with the money. Mr. Farrell said he knows there is a need for money with Women Helping Battered Women and the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, saying he is guessing the Jericho Food Shelf could also use more money. He said rather than spending \$4,000 on JHS, who gave up rental income, we should consider spending the money in a better way.

Motion made by Wendell Farrell; seconded by Bonnie Dustacosty; to amend Line 165, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, from increase \$500 to \$1,500; Line 170, Jericho Food Shelf, increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000; Line 171, Jericho Historical Society, decrease from \$4,000 to \$0; and Line 179, Women Helping Battered Women, increase from \$1,700 to \$3,700.

Mr. Barrington read back the motion amending the Town budget, with a net \$0 change to total spending. Ms. McMains said she is not a member of the JHS Board, but she knows it is not rented because the renovations were just finished and they need to go through a Development Review Board (DRB) process. She discussed the rationale for providing the funding in the past. She said she understands the Saxon Hill issue is very emotional, but there were septic concerns involved, noting some of the concerns.

Jean-Marie Milliken stated she is on the JHS Board, saying whether you take away the \$4,000 or not, there was not a contrived reason to ask Saxon Hill School to vacate. She discussed the reasons; noting if they do rent space, it will be to an entity who doesn't use the septic much. She discussed concerns with the building that is being used as an apartment and the costly nature of working on a building near the river.

Allaire Diamond stated he is an alumni parent of a student at Saxon Hill and he supports this motion. He discussed the traumatic nature of being involved in the eviction of the school and the lack of transparency in the process. He stated that if we, as a Town, want to continue to support JHS, we need to see more detail about what they do with the money since they, in a negative way, removed a school that supports many students. Mr. Diamond reiterated that he supports the motion.

Kain Norra suggested a compromise with half taken away and half left for JHS. Mr. Barrington discussed the possible ways to proceed in this situation, responding to questions from a number of citizens about the appropriate procedures. Mr. Booth stated there is a theme here that is developing, one of transparency; when organizations ask for money, residents are asking for justification for the requests. He said organizations need to be responsive and attend the meeting. Kathy Paris said in order to vote one way or another she would like to know what JHS does with the \$4,000.

Bob Cochran said he would like to speak to the question of whether there should be a punishment to JHS, saying they didn't seem to have much sense of history when they were dealing with the school. He discussed his wife's involvement in the school and said he is in favor of some slapping of the wrists, but perhaps not \$4,000. He agreed with what Wendell said, including where the money should go. Ms. McMains said JHS requested the money to be used to repair one of the crumbling walls by the river. Phyl Newbeck said that her understanding is that JHS received a fair amount of money from Sachs 5th Avenue related to Snowflake Bentley.

Mr. Barrington invited a group to consider an amendment to the amendment, discussing how to handle the amendment and the vote.

Motion made by Frank Popeleski; seconded by Molly Neal; to disagree with the Moderator and call a vote. Mr. Barrington explained the vote.

Vote: Motion approved: 65 for; 62 opposed; and 2 abstained.

Mr. Barrington said the question has been called, explaining the motion being voted on is whether to call the question.

Vote: Motion passed.

Mr. Barrington read Mr. Farrell's motion to amend the budget, with no change to the total Town budget. Leslie Nulty asked if the motion passes whether it is possible to have another amendment to make small addition to the JHS budget. Mr. Barrington agreed that was a possibility.

Vote: Motion approved: 92 for; 33 opposed; and 4 abstained.

Motion made by Leslie Nulty; seconded by Patty Carroll; to allocate \$1,000 to JHS.

Ms. Nulty said Jericho is blessed with a lot of historical buildings and it is in the interest of the Town to maintain them. She discussed the different organizations in Town that are delegated the responsibility of maintaining various properties. She also discussed the concerns with the historic Old Red Mill. Ms. Nulty said as a Town, we need to figure out a better way to preserve our historical assets because they are vital to the future and the character we want to preserve.

Frederica Keating stated she is the past President of Saxon Hill School and she is in support of the amendment. She said she would like to know the total budget of JHS and understand how the \$4,000 impacts their budget.

Mr. Farrell discussed some of the history of the Old Red Mill and the considerable changes he has seen over the years. He stated JHS should be somewhat interested in history and Saxon Hill School was a part of Jericho longer than Snowflake Bentley. He expressed further concern about the eviction of the school and comments made surrounding it. Mr. Farrell stated there is no reason to pat them on the back and give them some money, the school and the families were treated badly. Mr. Barrington suggested streamlining comments since a similar amendment had already been considered.

Bill Drislane spoke in favor of the amendment to provide \$1,000 to JHS. He said the Selectboard has considered all of these items up front and we should honor what they are doing here to some extent. He agreed with the concerns raised, saying he would like to call the vote.

Ms. Voigt-Walsh said she supports the \$1,000 because she thinks the Town has a responsibility to the historical buildings. She said, on the point of transparency, when organizations are requesting funds it should be very clear what the money will be used for and if a grant is involved in the funding. She discussed the historic buildings in Town, noting there is substantial and important upkeep that needs to be done to them.

Tracie Wright spoke against the motion. She read the last paragraph of the JHS Report on page 34 of the Town Report, asking if that is the funding we are talking about. Mr. Nulty said that was the funding provided last year. Ms. Wright asked how long we have budgeted \$4,000. Mr. Nulty said for years. Ms. Wright expressed concern about annual grants and concern about not getting transparency. She stated she prefers to zero their line item, encouraging her neighbors to do the same.

Gary Irish said he was a Director of JHS until about 10 years ago and he was aware of the septic issues. He discussed the situation with the school and how JHS had spent the funding while he was involved in the organization, saying he doesn't think the reduction will drastically affect their budget. He discussed efforts to acquire antique milling machinery, which was subsequently sold for scrap metal. Mr. Irish said JHS seems very interested in Snowflake Bentley, but seems to have lost interest in Jericho history, noting they are not involved in the current efforts to write another edition of Jericho's history.

Jim Carroll agreed with the criticisms raised here, saying it is how we do things that is important. He discussed how one or two people can influence the direction of an organization. He encouraged sending a strong message about the importance of community and transparency. Mr. Carroll suggested that we show a bit of kindness by restoring a little bit of money and imposing a $\frac{3}{4}$ penalty, discussing an example. He said that would send a message for boards to listen to their constituency.

Question called by Tracie Wright; seconded by Rob Allen. Josh Benes clarified whether the \$1,000 would be an addition to the budget. Mr. Barrington responded yes.

Vote: Motion to restore \$1,000 to JHS budget and increase the Town budget by \$1,000. Motion failed.

Mr. Nulty continued discussing expenditures, noting the following:

- Town Hall Bond declined because it was reissued as discussed under the Capital Budget.
- Town Library:
 - Salaries increased with additional time.
 - Town Contribution also increased to cover heat, electricity, and memberships in organizations.
- Transfers to Reserve Funds:
 - Reappraisal Fund no change because the Record Preservation Fund declined.

Mr. Barrington called a vote on Article I. **Vote: Motion approved virtually unanimously.**

ARTICLE II: Shall the Town collect its taxes in equal installments due in the Town Offices on September 15, 2016, and March 15, 2017, with postmarks acceptable?

ARTICLE III: Shall the town authorize the Selectboard to borrow money for the temporary needs of the Town?

ARTICLE IV: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to sell or otherwise dispose of 2.23 +/- acres of town land located at the corner of Route 15 and Packard Road (parcel #PA05)?

ARTICLE V: Shall the Town Collect its taxes by its Treasurer in accordance with 32 VSA Section 4791?

Mr. Barrington asked to combine Articles II, III, and V. There was no objection. Mr. Barrington read the Articles. Motion made by Paul Gross; seconded by Evergreen Herb. **Vote: Motion approved unanimously.**

Mr. Barrington read Article IV. Motion made by Jessie Pelton; seconded by Dave Schuler.

Mr. Nulty explained the Article has to do with 2.23 acres of land on the corner of Packard Road and Route 15. He discussed the history of the property, including the timing of the acquisition and the cost. He said the lot was intended to be the location of the Town Hall, but that didn't happen. Mr. Nulty discussed the use of the property in recent years as a staging area for Vermont Gas. He stated the Town has no intentions of doing anything with the property, noting the zoning constraints that limit what could be done with it. He said the Article authorizes the Town to dispose of it, but doesn't require it.

Someone asked if the property is zoned only for housing. Ms. McMains responded it could be a small commercial building, noting it is in the Village District and the zoning laws have changed to encourage development in village centers. She said the goal is to put it back in the tax rolls.

Chris Forleo said he is a new member of the newly formed Recreation Committee and he would like to disagree with the Selectboard. He asked for an opportunity for the committee to review possible land uses, discussing some possible uses. He asked that we do not vote in favor of this Article and give the committee a chance to review possible uses.

Frank Popeleski asked whether the property would access water from the Champlain Water District or from Jericho East and if residential, how many homes would be allowed. Mr. Odit said the property is in the Village Water District, saying most commercial uses would be conditional and require a DRB hearing and most anything over one housing unit would also require DRB review.

Bert Lindholm expressed concern that if this property is used the Town would use a location that fills with water and has kept Packard Road from being washed out completely in the past. He said we were very fortunate we had this lot because there is a water course that flows through here that needs to be preserved.

Susan Bresee stated she is a member of the Planning Commission and she would encourage us to delay selling the property. She said it is in the Village District, not the Village Center District, and there are many uses allowed in this area, including encouraging density. She asked for a delay because the Planning Commission is working on doing a better job to preserve the scenic corridor along Route 15. She discussed concerns about what could happen while the Commission works on making improvements. She asked the citizens to allow the Recreation Committee and the Planning Commission to do their work.

Joshua Benes added that this property was reviewed as a Park-and-Ride few years ago, saying he was in favor. He noted there was real opposition to the Park-and-Ride, but he would support a potential Park-and-Ride there in the future.

Tracie Wright asked whether the Article could be tabled instead of voting it down. Mr. Barrington discussed the procedural issues with tabling versus postponing to a time certain.

Motion made by Tracie Wright; seconded by Frank Popeleski; to postpone the Article to next Town Meeting.

Ms. Wright encouraged postponing the vote for a year to allow ideas within the community to be pursued. She said this is a big decision and it is worth taking the year to allow the committees to research our options. Kathy Smithers said she lives on Packard Road, saying she understands tourism is a huge thing. She stated there have been a lot of changes and she wonders if tourism will remain as big as it has been. She discussed the gorgeous views along Route 15 and the impact of development in the area; adding Vermont is beautiful and we need to treasure the beauty.

Mr. Booth clarified that if we vote to postpone the Article it would mean that we want to continue this conversation; but we can also vote no to end the discussion. Ms. McMains stated the Selectboard is glad people are having this conversation, which is why they brought it forward at Town Meeting. She said the thought was to allow more people to benefit from that land, but this has been an exciting discussion. Mr. Booth added that having it empty also benefits the Town.

Bill Drislane clarified the Warning is asking for authority, but the Selectboard doesn't actually have to do it. Ms. McMains agreed. Mr. Drislane said he didn't see that the Town would do so without agreement. Chris Forleo stated the Recreation Committee would like to consider how we might use this property, discussing the reasons for having a Recreation Committee. He said he doesn't know if this land will come into play or not, but to give the Selectboard authorization to sell without even consideration doesn't make sense. He said any time the Town is talking about selling land it deserves a larger forum. Ms. McMains said that is why it is being discussed at this meeting. Mr. Forleo supported postponing the vote.

Pam Gillis spoke in favor of postponement versus voting against the Article to ensure that it will come back at next Town Meeting.

Vote: Motion to postpone until next Town Meeting approved virtually unanimously.

ARTICLE VI: To hear the reports of the Town Officers.

Mr. Barrington presented the written reports in the Town Report and stated this is the time to make comments regarding any of the reports.

Motion by Sonia Schuyler; seconded by Paul Gross.

Robin Bartlett said he would like to discuss the \$10,000 spent on restriping. Ms. Mercer responded that we have passed the budget. Mr. Barrington said it is not relevant to one of the printed reports. Tom Joslin said he would like to make a technical comment about the Rivers Land Account statement on page 51. Mr. Barrington said that is not a report of a Town Officer, so it is not part of this motion.

Ms. Mercer stated today is her last day as a Selectboard member, noting she is the Chair of the new Recreation Committee. She said the committee will be meeting the first Wednesday of every month at the Town Hall, encouraging everyone to listen and participate. She said the committee does have a vacancy, so people can apply if they are interested in serving on the committee. Ms. Mercer discussed the committees plans. Jessie Pelton asked Ms. Mercer to speak about the scope of the mandate for Recreation Committee compared to the Trails Committee and others. Ms. Mercer said the Recreation Committee does overlap a bit with other committees in Town, but the goal is to document all recreation activities in one place for people to find out what is going on, saying it is difficult for people new to Town to find activities. She said the charter is on the website at: jerichovt.gov.

Bert Lindholm said pages 30-45 in the Town Report list several committees that do a lot of work, with varying numbers of members. He said he hopes people will support these committees, noting he heard there has been

difficulty filling some vacancies. He discussed the importance of ensuring these activities continue to be supported, encouraging people to contact the names listed in the report with any questions.

Mr. Barrington called a vote on Article VI. **Vote: Motion approved unanimously.**

ARTICLE VII: Other Town business thought proper when met.

Mr. Booth said this is his 24th Town Meeting and it is the first one that Kelly King is not attending. He explained she was hospitalized and her daughter set up a blog to keep people informed about what is happening: kellysstupidhead.blogspot.com. Ms. McMains thanked Mr. Booth and asked him to post on Front Porch Forum.

Tate Brannon asked how you can encourage people to ride the bus, which is an asset to the Town and reduces carbon footprint, as well as wear on cars. He made a Motion that the Town of Jericho help advertise the bus route on its website and other appropriate means. Mr. Nulty responded that doesn't require a motion, the Selectboard will have the information added to the website and a notice posted on Front Porch Forum. Ms. McMains added that they have discussed the lack of shelter at the village stop and spoke with CCTA; noting that since the route is in its third year of operation they were planning a shelter in Riverside in the spring, but we suggested in Jericho Corners instead. She stated the Selectboard will follow up. Mr. Brannon said he spoke with them as well and they said the expenses would be around \$20,000. Mr. Nulty said we are free to build something more appropriate. Mr. Brannon agreed, discussing CCTA ridership requirements before they will provide a shelter.

Motion made by Tate Brannon; seconded by Peter Booth; that the Town of Jericho explore options to build a bus shelter at the Jericho Corners bus stop by the Post Office, explore costs, and present information for next year's budget.

Todd Gates said he appreciates the efforts of fellow townspeople, saying it is up to us to look at how much it costs and present the information to the Town; rather than asking the Town to do it for us. He said we can do a little homework. Wayne Howe stated he is in favor of exploring this idea, saying it is worth noting that CCTA's shelters include the branding and signage associated with them that conveys to those who use it they are part of a larger infrastructure. He said we should keep that in mind if we consider building a shelter of our own. Olaf Verdonk agreed, saying let's figure it out. He noted it would be a great Eagle Scout project. Mr. Brannon agreed, saying there are other towns who didn't use CCTA shelters, but had their own built. He said he does not have the technical expertise to design a shelter, but likes the Eagle Scout project idea. Mr. Schuler noted that if the Town builds a shelter, instead of waiting for one provided by CCTA, there may be unintended consequences. He raised questions about the uses and limitations of such a shelter.

Vote: Motion approved virtually unanimously.

Matt Champlin, UJFD Fire Chief, thanked the citizens of Jericho for their support of the Fire Department. He vented a point of frustration, saying the public wants transparency, information, and knowledge. He stated he spent over ten hours with the Selectboard and Mr. Odit discussing the budget and the information is there at three publically warned Selectboard meetings. Mr. Champlin encouraged people to contact him with questions, saying nobody has contacted them directly. He said they are transparent and have answered all the questions they were asked. He discussed the various ways of contacting him, directly and indirectly. Mr. Champlin said he personally puts a lot of time into the budget and has detail to support all of the amounts. He encouraged people to attend public meetings to get their questions answered. He again thanked everyone for their support, saying the Fire Department appreciates it; they are a hardworking group who spend a significant amount of time to prepare to assist the citizens during an emergency.

Ms. Wright thanked Mr. Champlin for what he said. She brought to the Selectboard's attention that Williston is looking at rewriting their ordinance around vicious domestic animals and asked the Selectboard to think about it as well. She said we fund many different groups and have many buildings, saying she wonders how much direction and coordination we are having across those groups; it seems appropriate to look at as a full community. Ms. Wright addressed the Moderator, apologizing for interrupting Mr. Carroll when he was speaking, saying it was her attempt to call the question since he was given 30 seconds to speak and took longer than that. She expressed concern that it felt as though long-time residents were not held to the same rules as she and other relative newcomers to this community were held during the meeting, noting examples. She stated that is not who we are as a community, but it can feel that way, apologizing again for the disruption. Mr. Barrington said her point is very well-taken and it is a constant balance. He apologized to Ms. Wright.

Diane St. Cyr said when she opened her business, there was a process that she had to go through to make sure it would fit into the Town. She asked about the increase of small farms in the community and how that is being addressed, noting that she knows that there is a lot of property in Jericho still zoned as farmland. She discussed an example and asked if it is being addressed. Mr. Nulty said those are all good questions and she should contact Katherine Sonnick, Town Planner, or the Planning Commission, which meets twice a month. He suggested she get involved and express her views.

Motion made by Paul Gross; **seconded** by Bill McMains to adjourn Town Meeting. David Barrington adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Richardson